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SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
God is still speaking, y'all

Advent Greetings SECUCC,

As we marked the Winter Solstice last night, some of you may have gathered for Longest Night services and now are focused on Christmas Eve and the First Sunday of Christmas that follows. Wh preparing for worship, visiting people, caring for patients and clients, or gathering with family and friends, the rise in Covid-19 cases and hospitalizations and the fast pace with which the Omicron v spreading raises concerns. As a result, precautions are being evaluated.

For congregations and ministry settings with in-person or hybrid events scheduled, conversations about whether plans need to shift to either reduce the number who gather or go completely virtual the table. These can be difficult discussions as you weigh the balance of physical safety and emotional health. What is best for one congregation or setting may look very different from what works

As you seek to make the safest and most suitable decisions for these coming days, I invite clery and lay leaders to contact me if you need assistance or have questions. We continue to seek updat information and recommendations from our qualified sources, and I would be happy to provide support and share resources. If you do gather in person, at the very minimum please include the follo precautions in your protocol:

- Require masks when in buildings, as well as outdoors where people are congregated.
- Set space up to allow for social distancing.
- Be cautious in how music is presented/utilized
  - If choirs/ensembles are singing, please have them remain masked, distanced from the congregation, and preferably distanced from one another
  - Minimize congregational singing in any way possible, and do so only with masks
  - Provide shields for musicians – especially important for instrumentalists
- Don't pass things through the rows.
- If passing the peace, do so in place and from a distance – wave, peace sign, etc
- Have hand sanitizer available and easily accessible.
- If possible, keep windows and doors open or worship outside

Please don't hesitate to contact me as needed (phone/text (404) 615-2492 or email kwood@secucc.org. I hold you in my prayers as you move through this time.

Blessings and Peace,

Rev. Kim Wood
Conference Minister, Southeast Conference UCC

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